ST. MARY'S CHURCH

Wanamie, Penna.

Golden Anniversary

Jubilee Banquet

†

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4th, 1953

†

Our sincere thanks and appreciation to all who helped to make our Golden Anniversary a success; particularly, the firms and individuals contributing toward the publication of this Jubilee booklet. We urge our readers to patronize them.

JUBILEE COMMITTEE

To all the parishioners, friends, and benefactors of St. Mary's Church, Wanamie: May God look benignly upon you and reward you for your many Kindnesses.

REV. V. J. KUPSTAS

LOCAL No. 6765 - U. M. W. of A.

WANAMIE, PENNA.

Victor Putinski ..... President
John Rasavage ..... Vice President
Edward Mazur ..... Recording Secretary
Joseph Dutzar ..... Financial Secretary
Stanley Waslofski ..... Treasurer

— Grievance Committee —

Frank Beeunas Steve Haverlak George Check

Compensation Secretary ..... John Bartuska, Bolish Zubritski

— Auditors —

Alex Antonaitis Chester Doliva Joseph Olshefski

Door Tender ..... Fred Stoker

— NEWPORT TOWNSHIP —

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★

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★

— School Directors —

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★

AUDITOR — JOSEPH GIZARA

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and be

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A Servant of Your Parish

and

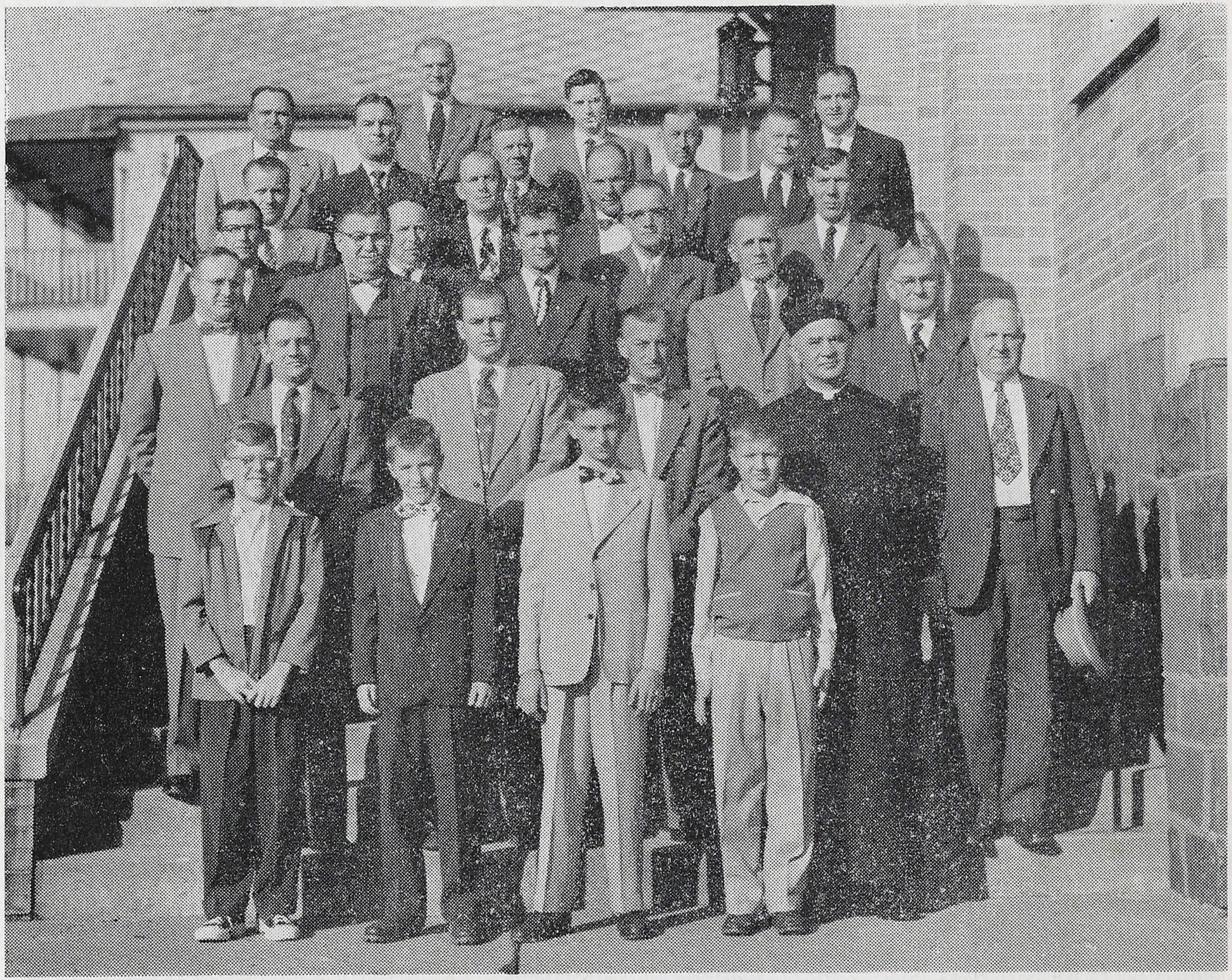
Still Have Lots of Fun

HOLY NAME SOCIETY

— of —

ST. MARY'S CHURCH

Wanamie, Pa.



Compliments

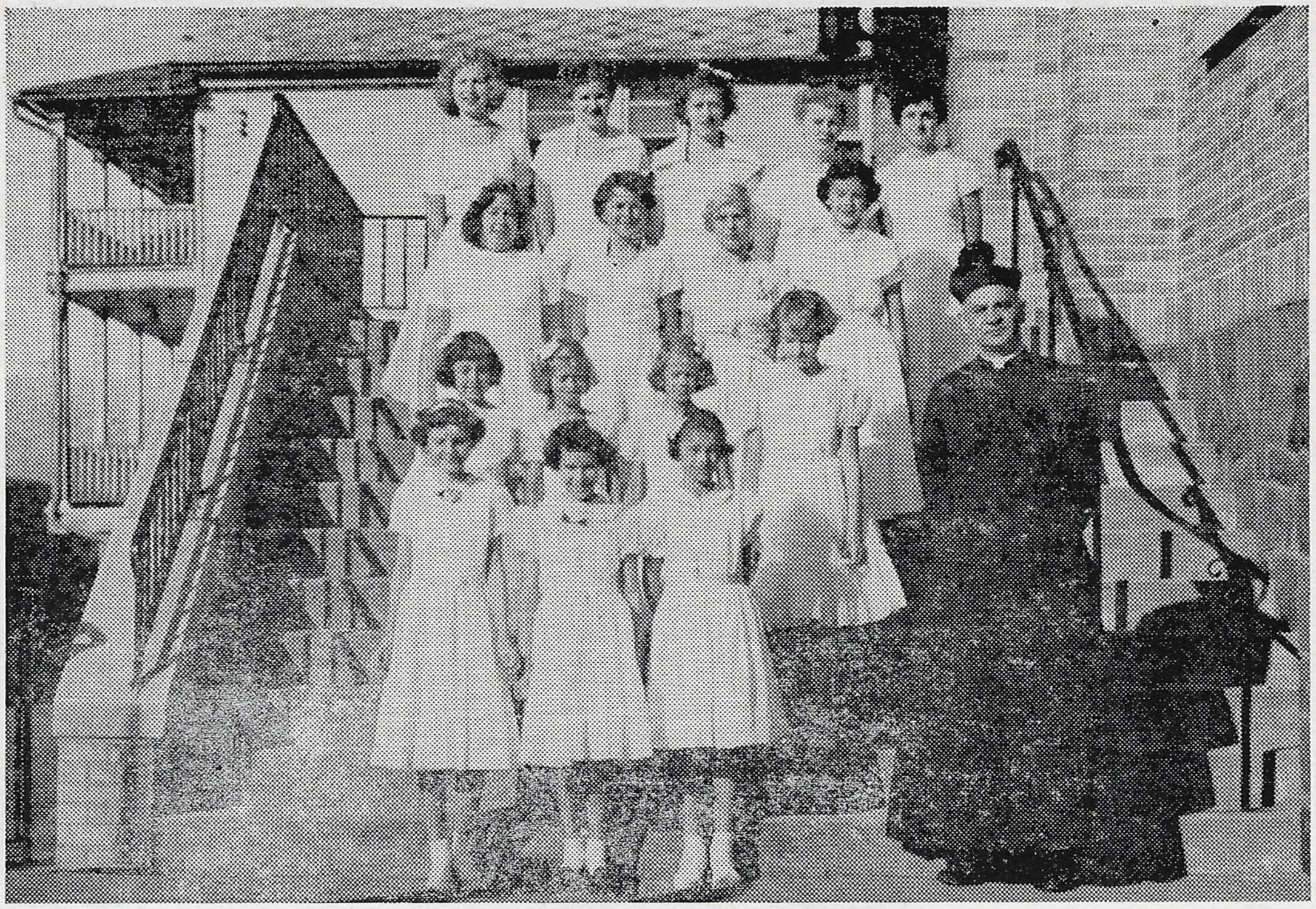
of the

CONFRATERNITY

— OF —

CHRISTIAN

MOTHERS



Congratulations from the . . . .

BLESSED VIRGIN MARY SODALITY of ST. MARY'S CHURCH

GOLDEN JUBILEE COMMITTEE

HONORARY CHAIRMAN ..... REV. V. KUPSTAS
CHAIRMAN ..... ANTHONY SHUKWIETIS
CHAIRLADY ..... MRS. MARIE BARTUSKI
SECRETARY ..... JOHN RASAVAGE

Catering
Mrs. Albert Yarasavage
Mrs. Palmyra Krafchik
Edward McClosky, Sr.

Music
Anthony Shukwietis

AD
Edward Kubasek
John Bartuska
Mrs. John Bartuska
Albert Yarasavage

Chair and Table
Jacob Kerutis
Edward McClosky, Jr.
Leonard Wydotis
John Rasavage

Public Address
Edward McClosky, Jr.
John Bartuska

Cloak Room
Kathryn Shukwietis
Joan Shukwietis
Carol Kerutis

Entertaining
John Kashatus, Sr.

ecoration
Mrs. Al Yarasavage
Mrs. Helen Linkitis
Mrs. John Bartuska
Mrs. Irene Swokla
Joseph Zabrowski

Typing
Mrs. Dorothy Kubasek
Kathryn Shukwietis
Joan Shukwietis
Carol Kerutis

Door
William Stremikis
Mrs. Anna Butsavage

Hostess
Mrs. Palmyra Krafchik
Mrs. Josephine Kane
Mrs. Betty Long
Julia Bolsavage
Mrs. Helen Stremikis

Compliments

— of —

ST. MARY'S PASTOR

REV. V. KUPSTAS

— and —

JUBILEE

COMMITTEE

HONOR ROLL

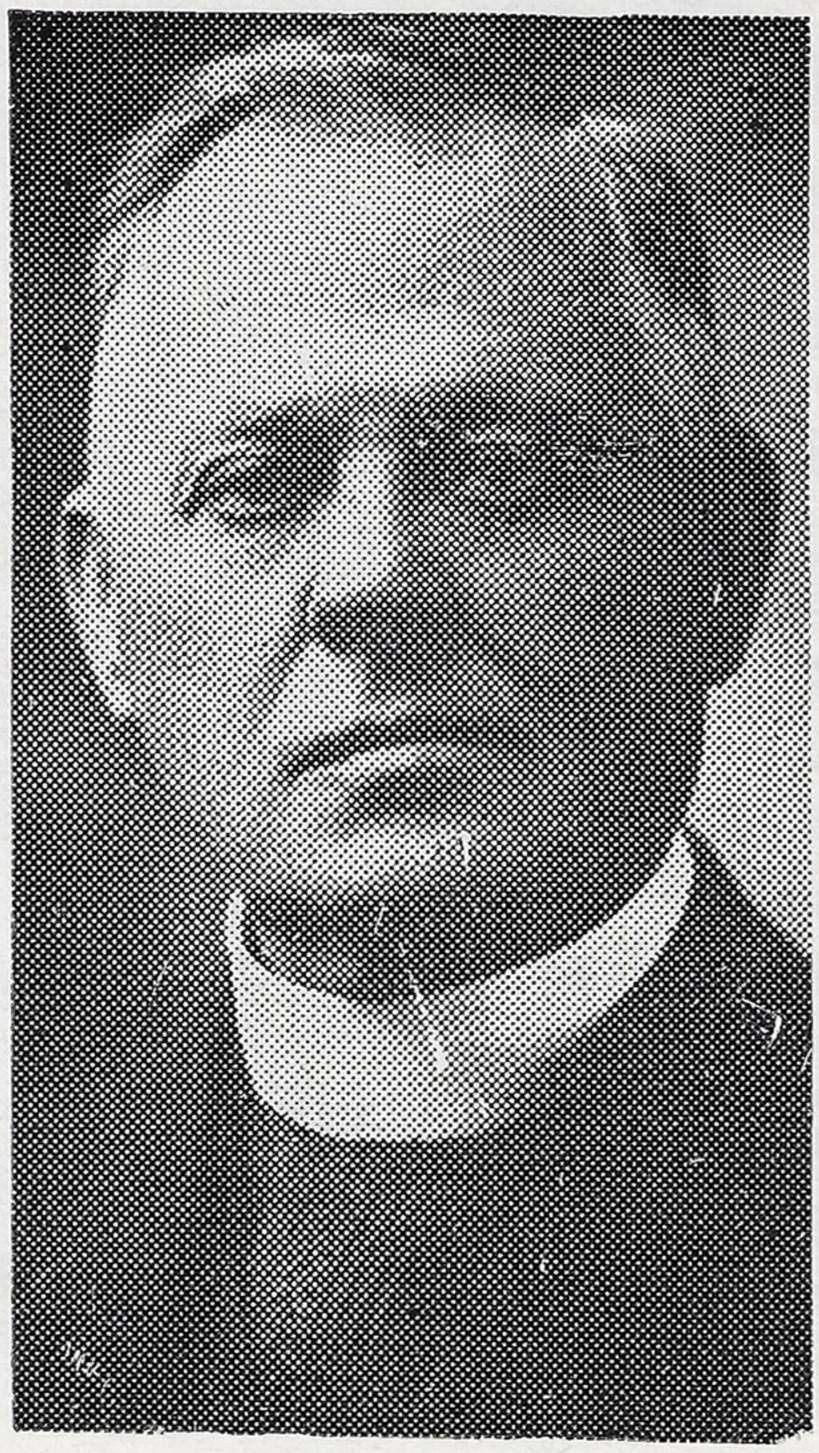
LIVING MEMBERS OF ST. MARY'S FOUNDERS

Joseph Karpavicius
Mrs. Pauline Karpavicius
Mrs. Mary Kunca
Mrs. Mary Bielauskas
Mrs. Victoria Urbaitis
Mrs. Catherine Zabarauskas

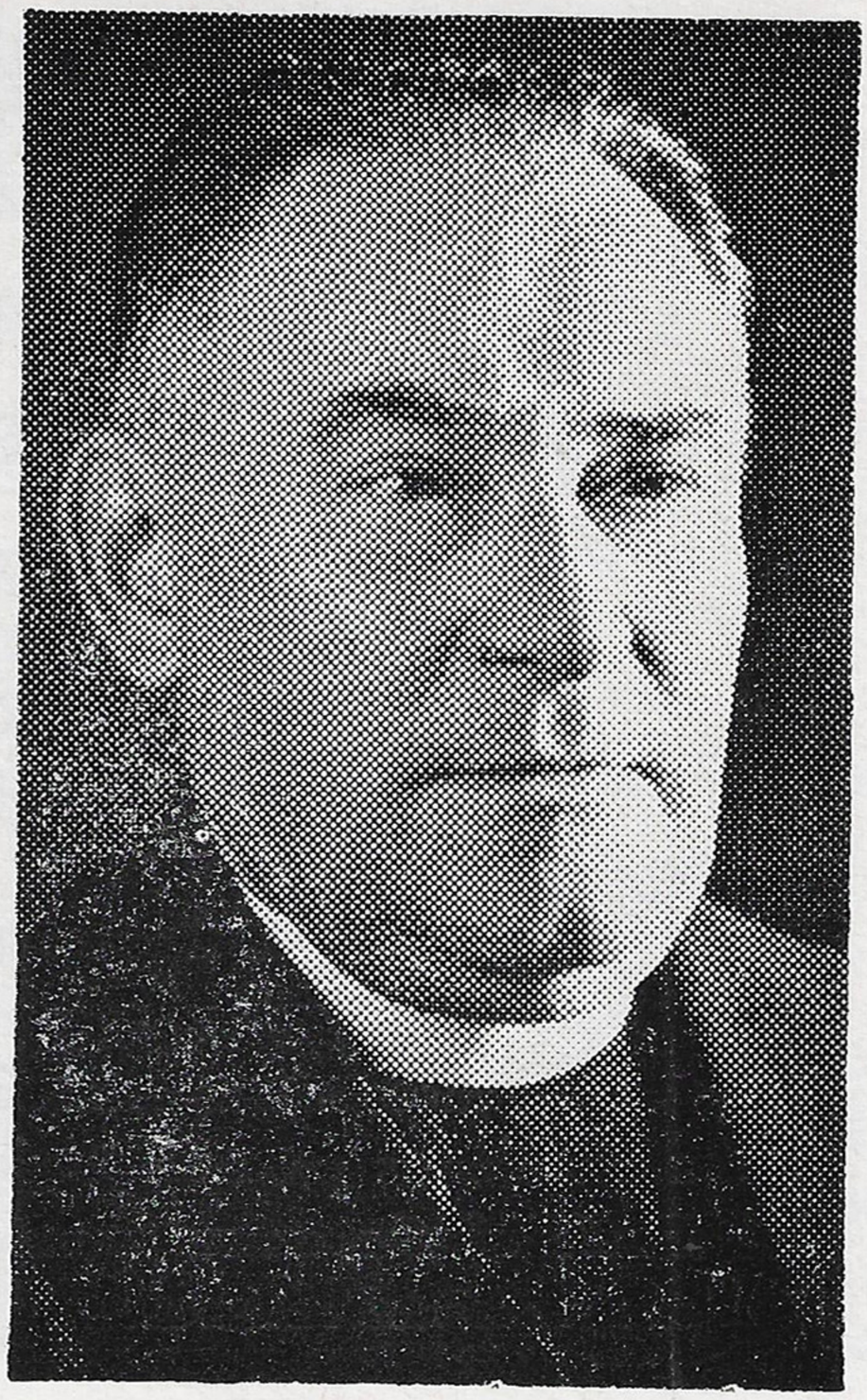
God bless those who, by His Divine Providence, are with us on this joyful occasion. God rest the Souls of the other founders who have departed to their eternal reward.

ST. MARY'S PRIESTS

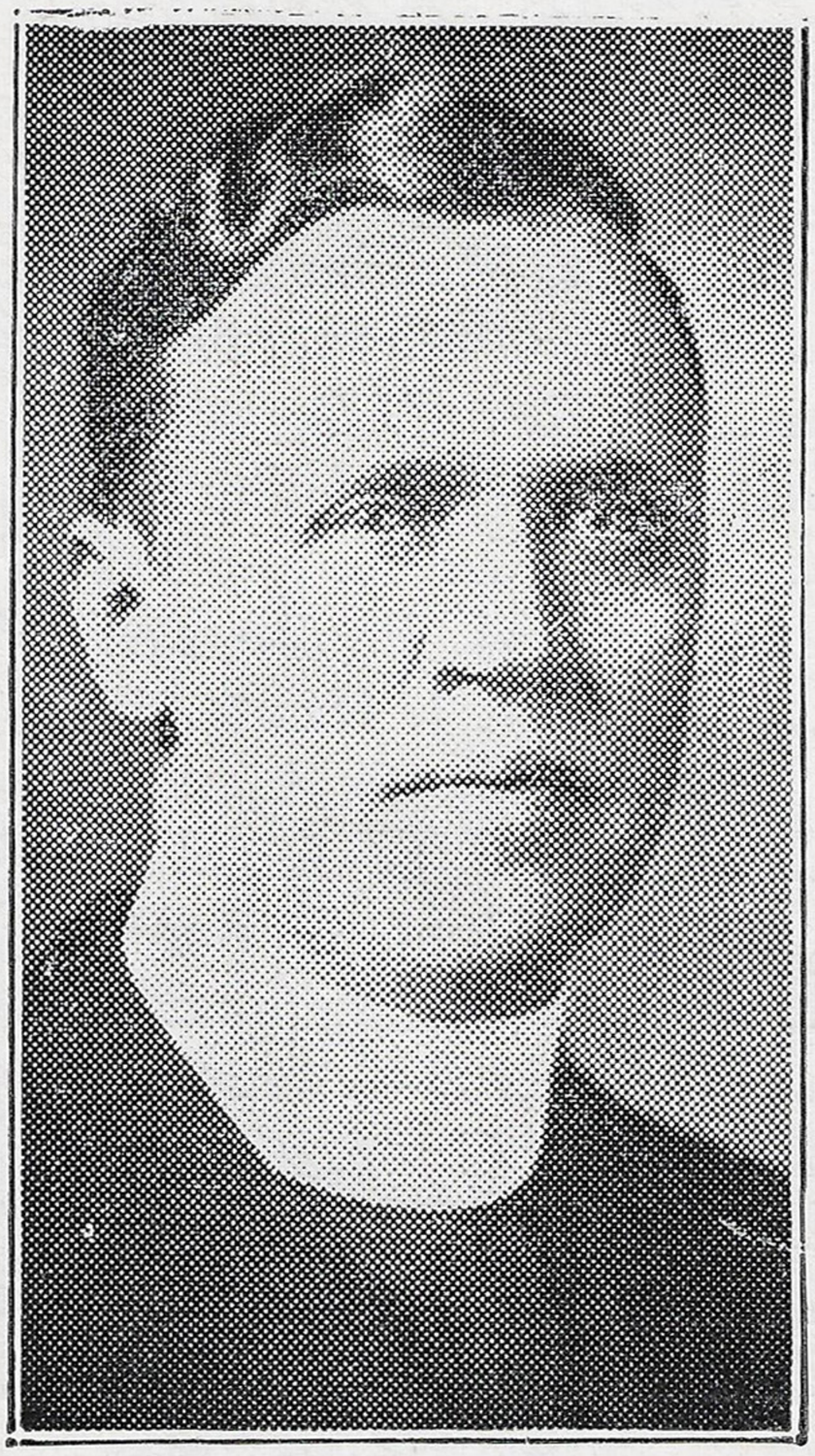
1901-1902	Rev. J. Zilinskas
1902-1903	Rev. M. Plausinaitis
1903-	Rev. W. Matulaitis
1903-1904	Rev. J. Serwetka
1904-1905	Rev. A. Szaulinskas
1905-1906	Rev. A. Lopatto
1906-	Rev. M. Pankauskas
1906-1908	Rev. J. Kasakaitis
1908-1912	Rev. G. Inczura
1912-1914	Rev. S. Struckus
1914-	Rev. F. Gugis
1914-1915	Rev. A. Szaulinskas
1915-	Rev. C. Szatkus
1915-1916	Rev. C. Polujanskis
1916-1932	Rev. J. Miliauskas
1932-1933	Rev. J. Rastutis
1933-1953	Rev. V. Simkonis
1953-	Rev. V. Kupstas



REV. J. KASAKAITIS



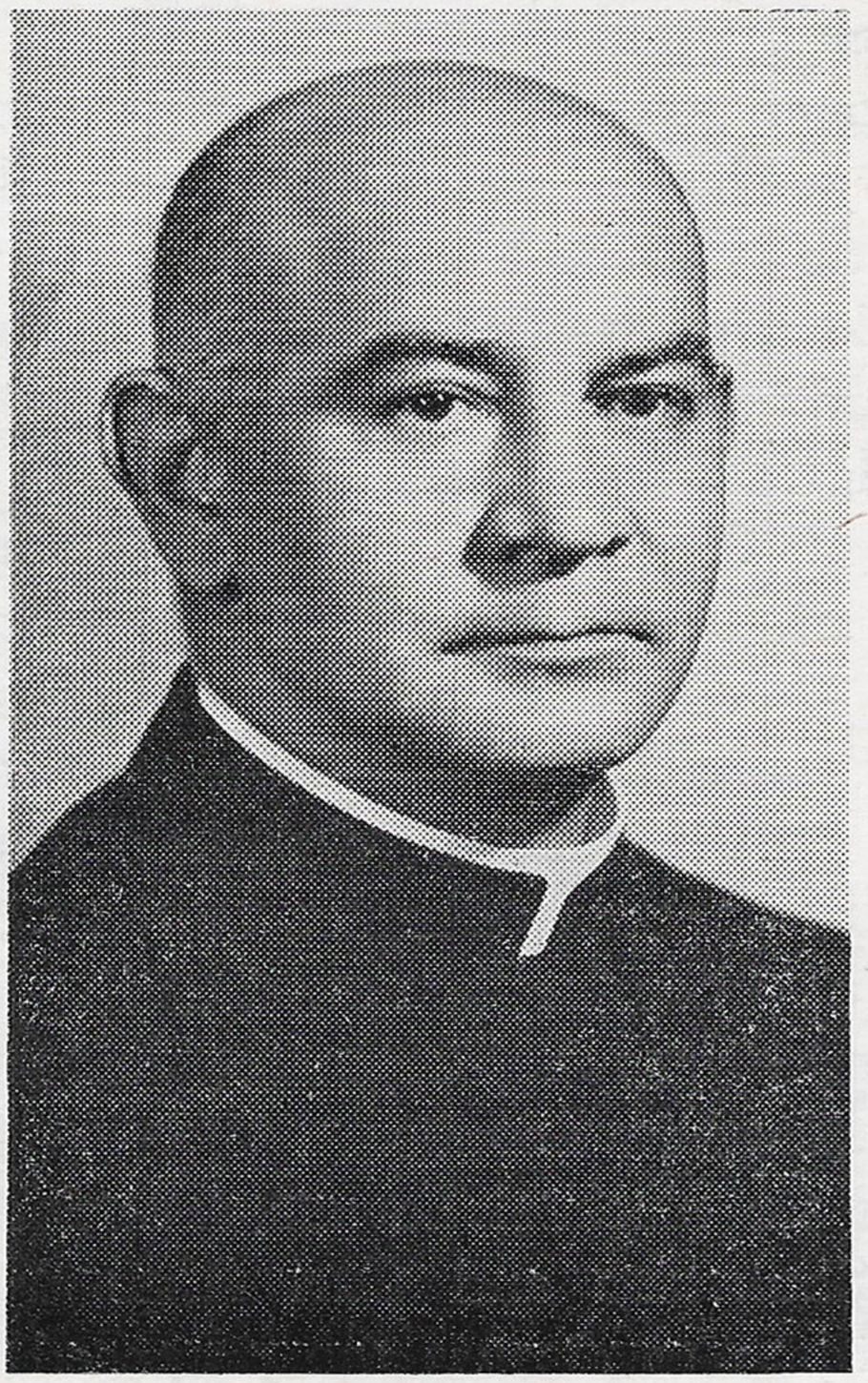
REV. G. INCZURA



REV. J. K. MILIAUSKAS

REV. V. SIMKONIS

ST. MARY'S CHURCH, WANAMIE, PA.



REV. V. KUPSTAS

Present Pastor

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH

Wanamie, Penna.

Before the turn of the century, in the locality now called Wanamie (Newport Township), there resided a small group of Lithuanian families, similar to many such groups living in various parts of Wyoming Valley.

Because most immigrants from Lithuania understood the Polish language, it was natural for them to go to the Polish Catholic churches closest to them, when there were no churches of their own nationality nearby. Wanamie Lithuanians attended St. Adalbert's in Glen Lyon and Holy Trinity in Nanticoke. However, they strongly desired and hoped, some day, to have a church of their own. Unlike their countrymen in the neighboring areas, the Lithuanians of the Wanamie-Glen Lyon section took steps to turn their wish into a reality.

It was through the energetic initiative of Anthony Shukvietis and a few others that a movement was under way early in 1901.

An extract from the first pages of an old St. Mary's Church Record relates the following: "On June 23, 1901, Lithuanians from Wanamie and Glen Lyon held their first meeting. Michael Abraitis was elected chairman and Vladas Mielauckas secretary. It was decided to found a church, dedicated to the Blessed Mother of God, under the title "Ausros Vartai" (Gate of Heaven). For this purpose they would purchase the former Methodist Church situated on the "New Road."

These officers were selected:

Casimir Pieksztininkas, president.
Carl Alvis, vicee president.
Vladas Mielauckas, secretary.
Anthony Shukvietis, treasurer.
Vincent Matackauskas, Joseph Baejunas,
Anthony Franka, trustees.

Collectors of funds for the new church:

In Wanamie: Joseph Baejunas, Vincent Matackauckas, Martin Sluzialis, Matthew Levulis.

In Glen Lyon: Michael Levulis, Thomas Masialis.

Anthony Shukvietis and Carl Alvis were appointed to journey to the Bishop to discuss the proposed church and new parish.

PROGRAM

National Anthem

Invocation ..... Rev. George Tribendis

Introductory Remarks ..... Anthony Shukwietis

Toastmaster ..... Rev. Joseph K. Miliauskas

Selections ..... St. Mary's Jubilee Choir

Remarks ..... Rev. John S. Kasakaitis

Humorist ..... "Bob" Haines

Remarks ..... Rev. Victor A. Simkonis

Remarks ..... Rev. Victor J. Kupstas

Benediction ..... Rev. Joseph Aruscavage

Lithuanian National Anthem ..... "Lietuva Tevyne Musu"

Music by — Syl Czyzyk and his Cracker Jacks

MENU

CELERY HEARTS CARROT STICKS

SLICED TOMATOES PICKLES OLIVES

FRUIT CUP

TENDERIZED STEAK MUSHROOMS GRAVY

FLUFFY WHIPPED POTATOES

CREAMY COLE SLAW PICKLED BEETS

BUTTERED GREEN CUT BEANS

HOME BAKED ROLLS BUTTER

GOLDEN COCONUT CAKE COFFEE

After $700.00 were gathered, the Methodist church was purchased, October 7, 1901, and the deed presented to Bishop Hoban. This edifice, a wooden frame building, seated about 180 persons. Temporarily, a makeshift altar was fashioned together, and around Christmastime 1901, Rev. J. Zilinskas, pastor of St. Casimir's Lithuanian Church, Plymouth, Penna., who had acted in an advisory capacity during the formative stages of the new parish, held the first Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Recognizing that many things would be required to convert the building to Catholic usage, the less than 70 families, who made up the new parish, gave, unstintingly, of their time and money to build a sacristy, vestibule, and steeple. Generous parishioners supplied most of the traditional appurtenances, as personal donations to the church.

In 1902 when Rev. M. Plausinaitis relieved Rev. J. Zilinskas, who had been holding Holy Mass regularly every week, the church was fairly well established. Rev. M. Plausinaitis served but a few months, as did his two successors, Rev. W. Matulaitis and Rev. J. Serwetka. This seemed to be the pattern, also for Revs. A. Szaulinskas, A. Lopatto, and Pankauskas. A rectory was an urgent necessity in order to make a permanent residence for the clergy. During the tenure of Rev. J. Kasakaitis in 1906, the present rectory was completed. After Rev. J. Kasakaitis came Revs. Inczura, S. Struckus, F. Gugis, A. Szaulinskas, C. Szatkus, and C. Polujanskis, covering the period from 1908 to 1916.

With the coming of Rev. J. K. Miliauskas a period of construction and expansion began. The parish had grown considerably, and the necessity for a new and larger church was greatly felt. Energetically Rev. J. K. Miliauskas took to the task, and in 1922 the huge undertaking was started. After enthusing the parishioners to the need, the raising of funds began. The people responded very favorably. A parcel of land was purchased in order to locate the new edifice at the corner of the street intersection. Under the supervision of architects, Shroeder and Schmidt of Wilkes-Barre, the Berwick Lumber Company contracted to build the structure for $32,000.00. An additional $15,000.00 was expended for interior church furnishings.

It was a joyous occasion when the finished, new House of God was dedicated, May 31, 1926, by the Most Rev. Andrew Brennan. The following is part of the newspaper writeup of the Event: "The dedication of St. Mary's Church will go down as one of the most pleasing and memorable events in the history of

the Garden Village of Newport Township . . . . . A solemn High Mass was held with Revs. J. K. Miliauskas, celebrant; A. Sinkiewicz, deacon; J. J. Miliauskas, subdeacon; V. Nanorta, master of ceremonies; and J. Kasakaitis, preacher . . . . . At the conclusion of the Holy Mass, Bishop Brennan complimented the good people of St. Mary's on the great sacrifices they made in order that the new church could be a reality and paid a glowing tribute to the zealousness of the pastor . . . . . The Rev. Fathers present were: A. Lapinski, G. Inczura, J. Kuras, J. Leonard, S. Struckus, J. Shupshinskas, and F. Grzywacz."

Rev. J. K. Miliauskas worked tirelessly to pay off the debt, and by the time of his departure from St. Mary's only $8,200.00 remained. During 1932-1933 Rev. J. Rastutis administrated the parish, under the supervision of Rev. J. K. Miliauskas who had been appointed to Holy Trinity in Wilkes-Barre. He was succeeded in 1933 by Rev. V. Simkonis.

After more than a score of years of effort in raising the money, Rev. V. Simkonis, with the joyful parishioners, celebrated the burning of the mortgage when the parish finally became solvent.

Anticipating the coming Golden Jubilee of the founding of the church, Rev. Simkonis had the House of God exquisitely redecorated and refurnished. Tile floors were installed, new fixtures were added, and the basement remodeled. Both church and rectory were painted and the grounds graded and beautified. In all a total of more than $20,000.00 in improvements were made. He was succeeded on May 20, 1953, by Rev. V. Kupstas.

The church today stately stands up on the top of the hill which it so majestically occupies. Its spire, mounted by a cross, ever points heavenward, and its facade beams toward the valley and the houses which surround it. Its resounding voice rings out to all, reminding them that it is the House of God in their midst.

St. Mary's is a lasting memorial to the foresight of its humble, God-fearing founders, a tribute to the many priests who have served as pastors and administrators, and a source of righteous pride to its devoted and loving parishioners.

SIDELIGHTS:

Old timers will tell you that:

The time-worn statue of St. Casimir, seen in the church basement, was originally purchased and presented by the Lithuanians of St. Casimir's Society to St. Adalbert's Church, Glen Lyon. After St. Mary's, Wanamie, was established, it was transferred to the new church.

Much of the construction needed to change the Methodist church into a Catholic church was done by Joseph Burinskas.

The first Lithuanian priest to serve the Lithuanians of Wanamie and Glen Lyon was Rev. Kundirka of St. Mary's, Kingston, who used to come to St. Adalbert's at the request of Rev. Chekovich, the pastor, to hear the confessions of the Lithuanians twice yearly.

The first parishioners joined the new parish by signing their names on cards presented to them by Anthony Shukvietis. These had been obtained from the Bishop and contained the name "Church of our Lady of Vilna," as the title of the new church. In Vilnius, Lithuania, a miraculous picture of our Lady existed, called "Ausros Vartai." Hence, the name — "Our Lady of Vilna."

John Rutelonis donated many religious articles to the new church.

First child baptized: Anna Urbaitis.

First marriage: Josephine Stalevicius and Vincent Vosylius.

First death: Joseph Shukvietis.

Between Wanamie and Glen Lyon an abondoned schoolhouse was obtained, gratis, by Rev. G. Inczura. It was moved to the plot opposite the church and used for all church meetings, teaching children, etc. Rev. J. Miliauskas rented it to the school board, at $30.00 a month for two years, when there was a shortage of school rooms. It served as the "church" when the former St. Mary's was being demolished and the new one constructed. This old landmark was torn down during Rev. J. Rastutis' administration.

St. Joseph's Hanover, became a mission of St. Mary's in 1914. The superstructure and the church were built in 1923.

During Rev. J. K. Miliauskas' pastorate Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Lietuvnikas celebrated their golden wedding anniversary. It was a gala event. Mr. Lietuvninkas had served for a lenghty period as secretary and as treasurer, during the early formative days of the church.

A pious lady's deathbed gift of $500.00, to be used for whatever Rev. J. Miliauskas thought was most needed, inspired him to make it the first offering toward a new church. God's Providence works in mysterious ways.

So enthused were the parishioners over the prospects of a new church that Rev. J. K. Miliauskas collected $7,000.00 in cash during the first four days of the drive.

Assessments for the building of the church were $150.00 for married men, $100.00 for single persons.

The church was completed in 1925, but not dedicated until the spring of the following year.

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